

A Monthly Progress Report on the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth



Labor & Economic Briefing

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Here is a summary of headlining accomplishments from the last 30 days:

Encouraging Economic & Urban Development

New Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Officially Opens for Business: The new Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) is now officially open for business.

Executive Order 2003-18 renamed the Department of Consumer and Industry Services as DLEG and transferred programs of the Department of Career Development aimed at matching employers and workers to DLEG to help create one of the best trained workforces in the nation. Key programs from other departments focusing on economic development issues were also transferred to DLEG, including: Commission for the Blind, Commission on Disability Concerns, Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Fire-related programs and State Fire Marshal, Michigan Broadband Development Authority, Michigan Extension Telecommunications Rights-of-Way Oversight (METRO) Authority, Michigan Next



Energy Authority, and Michigan Strategic Fund. The new DLEG Web site is <http://www.michigan.gov/dleg>. The new DLEG logo was designed by Gina DiNatale Coon, senior designer for the former Michigan Department of Career Development, now part of DLEG. Her design was the winning logo out of four finalists designed and voted on in a logo contest by DLEG employees. "The launch of the new department marked an exciting day not only for our 4,500 employees, but also for the citizens and businesses of Michigan as well," Hollister said. "Governor Granholm's goal has been to make

Michigan number one, the magnet state, with the top economic development, job creation, innovation, entrepreneurship and urban revitalization programs. I am excited that this new department and its close working relationship with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation as part of DLEG puts us one step closer to making this objective a reality."

Former CIS programs in the new department include:

- Most regulatory functions that relate specifically to commercial, business, and workers' issues will be in DLEG, such as the Bureau of Commercial Services, Michigan Public Service Commission, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Office of Financial & Insurance Services, Bureau of Construction Codes/Fire Safety, Bureau of Safety & Regulation (which has been renamed as MIOSHA, the Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration), Michigan Employment Relations Commission, Michigan Tax Tribunal, and Liquor Control Commission.

- A new Worker's Compensation Appellate Commission is created.

- The Bureau of Worker's & Unemployment Compensation will be divided into three agencies within the DLEG: Unemployment Insurance Agency; Workers' Compensation Agency; and the Wage and Hour Division.

Functions of the former DCD now in DLEG include: Office of Workforce Development, Employment Service Agency, Office of Career and Technical Preparation, Office of Adult Education and Spanish-Speaking Affairs, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Office of Postsecondary Services, and Michigan Community Service Commission.

CIS bureaus whose core missions are more closely in line with other state departments were transferred out of DLEG, including:

- Bureau of Family Services, which regulates adult foster care, homes for the aged, child care homes/centers, child caring institutions, child placing agencies, adult/children camps, and court-operated facilities. It will be renamed "Office of Children and Adult Licensing" and transfers to the Family Independence Agency (<http://www.michigan.gov/fia>).

- Bureau of Health Services, which regulates health professionals, transfers to Department of Community Health (<http://www.michigan.gov/mdch>).

- Bureau of Health Systems, which regulates health facilities, emergency medical services and nursing homes; Controlled Substances Advisory Commission; and Advisory Committee on Pain and Symptom Management; transfers to Department of Community Health (<http://www.michigan.gov/mdch>).

An 18-minute video overview of the new department is available upon request by contacting Veronica Armstead at the Office of Media Technology via email at ArmsteadVeronicaT@michigan.gov or phone at 313-456-2930.



**Governor
Jennifer M.
Granholm**

Creating New Investments & Job Opportunities

Major Wins for Michigan's Manufacturing Industry with 32,000 Manufacturing Jobs Created or Retained in 2003: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm announced another major manufacturing win on Dec. 4th with Ford Motor Company's plans to reinvest in its two Wayne assembly plants. This new investment continues a positive manufacturing industry trend with more than 32,000 jobs retained or created in Michigan since the beginning of the year. Ford is among recent manufacturing successes that include major investments by American Axle in Three Rivers, General Motors Willow Run facility in Ypsilanti and Global Engine Alliance in Dundee. Michigan's new manufacturing projects in 2003 are expected to generate more than \$2.3 billion in private investment. "Ford's plant reinvestment is just one example of Michigan's recent manufacturing successes, proving that we can compete in the global market place and secure important manufacturing jobs," Granholm said. "This great win provides more momentum for us to build on with our continued focus on manufacturing." The Michigan Manufacturing Summit on December 8th brought together key business and labor leaders representing the manufacturing industry to engage with the Governor to identify the most critical issues facing the industry. The leaders explored possible solutions and made recommendations as part of her Manufacturing Matters initiative. Assistance from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) helped convince Ford to substantially modernize and retain its operations in western Wayne County. The Ford Wayne site currently employs 7,029 at two assembly plants, which together produce the Focus, Expedition and Navigator models. The new project would update Focus production facilities at the site. When the product transfer is complete, the Wayne Stamping and Assembly plant will be the sole producer of all North American Ford Focus brand vehicles.



Ford Executive Vice President Jim Padilla and Gov. Granholm.

Block Grants Spur Expansions and Jobs: Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) administered by the MEDC were recently announced to assist with infrastructure improvements leading to job creation in several Michigan communities:

- **Brown City:** A \$823,500 CDBG made available to Brown City will help facilitate public infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate the expansion of Llink Technologies. The project is expected to spur \$9.8 million in private investment and create 100 new manufacturing jobs.
- **Three Rivers:** A \$562,000 CDBG for the city of Three Rivers will help facilitate the expansion of American Axle & Manufacturing. The grant is expected to help the company create 100 new jobs and spur \$28 million in private investment. Three Rivers will use the funding to upgrade portions of the municipal water system and make road improvements to support the 50,000 square foot expansion. In 2002, American Axle launched a new driveline operation at its Three Rivers location that helped the company move production from its Mexico facility.
- **Coldwater:** A \$500,350 federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administered by the MEDC will pay for improvements recently made to a downtown Coldwater parking lot. It is anticipated that 40 new jobs will be created through increased retail activity resulting from the project.
- **Beaverton:** The MEDC is providing \$462,000 in CDBG funding for the city of Beaverton to extend a waterline for East Jordan Plastics' new manufacturing facility. The project is expected to create 45 new manufacturing jobs.
- **Grant:** A \$168,000 CDBG for the city of Grant made available through the MEDC will help the city make road, water and sewer improvements necessary for a 12,000 square-foot expansion of Grant Rent-All. The project is expected to create 17 new jobs and spur more than \$1 million in private investment in the community.
- **Birch Run, DeWitt and East Lansing:** The MEDC is providing \$41,500 in CDBG funding for Birch Run, Dewitt and Ingham County on behalf of East Lansing for downtown development market studies to encourage economic development and job creation. Each of the three communities will provide a minimum 100% funding match to help defray the cost. The individual studies include activities such as gathering and analyzing data on the impact of retail development and identifying the actual market area with the goal of developing a comprehensive plan for future growth.

Tri-Corridor Committee Approves WMU Biosciences Center: The newly formed Technology Tri-Corridor steering committee approved a plan for the new Western Michigan University Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center at its first meeting held Dec. 1. The mission of the new center in Kalamazoo is to complement discovery-oriented life sciences research conducted at the state's public universities and the Van Andel Institute in Grand Rapids. The Center will contract pharmaceutical development services as well as create a start-up/gap funding and resource service for high-potential bioscience start-up companies. The committee also approved funding guidelines for the 2004 Technology Tri-Corridor program. The Tri-Corridor, created by Governor Granholm and administered by the MEDC, expands on the success of the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor initiative by targeting two other high-growth industries: homeland security and advanced automotive technologies. The 19-member steering committee will chart the strategic direction of the Tri-Corridor, seeking out the best research and commercialization ventures in the three sectors through a competitive funding process.

Lansing Community College Gets \$1 Million for Alternative Energy Program: The federal Department of Energy has designated \$1 million to fund the Lansing Community College's new Alternative Energy Institute (AEI). The grant has statewide impact, since LCC will develop programs that can be implemented by other community colleges around Michigan. The Institute will provide training in the design and use of fuel cells, wind, solar, biomass and hybrid energy sources. It includes a demonstration site and a new curriculum that will be offered by the fall of 2005. The Alternative Energy Institute is another success for the state's NextEnergy initiative, designed to position Michigan as a world leader in alternative energy research, development, commercialization and education.

Ann Arbor #14 on National Institutes of Health Money List: The city of Ann Arbor, home of the University of Michigan and a burgeoning life sciences industry, was recently noted as being 14th in the nation for National Institutes of Health grant funding in fiscal year 2002. Detroit and East Lansing were also on the NIH "Top 100 Funded Cities" list, at 56th and 99th, respectively. The high level of NIH funding is indicative of the quantity and quality of advanced scientific research being conducted within the state. Through the Technology Tri-Corridor initiative administered by the MEDC, many innovations developed by life sciences research are being translated into the creation of new Michigan life sciences companies-over 70 in the past three years alone.

Linking Culture, Community & Economy

"Creating Cool" Conference With Best-Selling Author Richard Florida Sells Out Early: The Creating Cool Conference sold out a week early with more than 1,300 people attending the Dec. 11 event featuring Richard Florida author of the best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class*. The first gathering of its kind, is part of the Governor's "cool cities" initiative. Gov. Granholm opened the conference with introductory remarks. Other speakers included Dr. William Anderson, Director of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries, and David C. Hollister, Director of the Department of Labor & Economic Growth. "We are thrilled with the overwhelming response to this exciting event and only wish we could accommodate everyone who would have liked to come," said Granholm. "The Creating Cool Conference is a key part of the dialogue we are having with Michigan communities about how we create the cool cities and hot jobs that will attract the younger knowledge-workers who are key to our state's future economic prosperity."



Community leaders gave their teams cool names such as the "Awesome Albion" team above.

Granholm, Business and Labor Leaders Meet to Address Concerns, Develop Agenda for Manufacturing Executive Directive Signed to Streamline Permits, Licenses: Gov. Granholm met on Dec. 8th with Michigan's business and labor leaders at the Michigan Manufacturing Matters Summit to discuss issues related to the state of manufacturing in Michigan and develop a consensus agenda to take to Washington, D.C. to seek federal action to address their concerns. Granholm was able to deliver immediate results on one of the issues that business and labor leaders discussed when she signed an executive directive directing the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) to create an online "one-stop shop" for all state business permits and licenses. The concept is being developed by the DLEG to reduce the bureaucracy and waiting period for businesses to get licenses and permits. "Currently, our state's permitting and licensing process for businesses is a maze of bureaucracy and red tape," Granholm said. "This initiative will create a clear path to economic expansion and growth in Michigan." Participants in today's summit represented large and small manufacturers and labor organizations. They had an open discussion about issues ranging from health care to foreign currency. The consensus agenda that the group will push in Washington early next year contains specific action steps that will improve the state of manufacturing in Michigan and the nation. The consensus agreement is at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Consensus_80172_7.pdf. While the summit is the culmination of three months of legwork by Governor Granholm to meet with manufacturers and labor representatives in roundtables, personal meetings, and tours of manufacturing sites, she emphasized that today's event is just the first step in the journey to send the message on a national level that manufacturing matters and is vitally important to the U.S. economy. Granholm said Wisconsin held a similar summit in October, and Ohio is planning a manufacturing summit for December 11, joining the nationwide movement she started to draw awareness to the need for changes on the federal level to strengthen the manufacturing sector.

Protecting Michigan Consumers

OFIS Commissioner Seeks Insurance Rate Information: In an effort to solicit as many "real world" scenarios regarding home and auto insurance rate differences, Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) Commissioner Linda A. Watters is asking consumers to complete and return the OFIS Insurance Rate Disparity Complaint Form (http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis_ofis_fis_0035_76202_7.pdf). The form is also available by calling OFIS toll-free at 877-999-6442. Commissioner Watters has initiated this grassroots effort to gather specific information from consumers across the state and what they have seen happen to their insurance rates. OFIS staff will continue to distribute copies of the new "Insurance Rate Disparity Complaint Form" through direct mailings, legislative offices, the OFIS web site and at town hall meetings where we talked one-on-one with consumers. The information provided on the Insurance Rate Disparity Complaint Form will be compiled, analyzed and used in conjunction with research OFIS is conducting on insurance rates across Michigan.

OFIS Releases 2003 Home and Renters Guide: The Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) released the 2003 Buyers' Guide to Home and Renters Insurance in Michigan (http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis_ofis_03homegd_74854_7.pdf). All home insurance information is also available by calling OFIS toll free at 877-999-6442. "Shopping for insurance can be difficult and confusing," said OFIS Commissioner Linda A. Watters. "This guide is geared to educating consumers on insurance terms and policies. When a consumer is armed with information they make better choices and tend to get better rates." The OFIS web site has a direct link to home insurance information that gives consumers, in one place, the information they need to become a knowledgeable insurance shopper. While on the OFIS insurance web site, consumers can view example rates from more than 60 insurance companies that write in Michigan's individual market, check the complaint statistics on a company, find out what information should be on-hand when shopping for insurance, and find out what to expect from insurance companies and agent when shopping. It is important for consumers to remember that insurance companies cannot deny insurance solely because of the age of a house, its location, or the type of neighborhood its in. If an agent or company says that a house is not eligible for coverage, they must give a specific reason for the ineligibility of the home for coverage with that company. A consumer who is not eligible for coverage directly from a company is still eligible for coverage with Michigan Basic Property Insurance Association. Visit the OFIS web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/ofis> for information on Michigan's home insurance laws.

MPSC Announces Start of Phone Number Portability for Wireless Phone Customers: The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) announced Michigan phone customers in the Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland areas (located within what U.S. Census officials call Metropolitan Statistical Areas) will be able to switch wireless carriers within the same geographic area and keep their existing phone number. In addition, phone customers in the areas listed above can also switch from a wireline carrier to a wireless carrier or from a wireless carrier to a wireline carrier while keeping the same telephone number. Phone customers in other areas of Michigan will have this option available to them by May 24, 2004. To start the process, MPSC Chair J. Peter Lark noted that phone customers should not terminate service with their existing carrier before initiating service with the new prospective carrier. Customers are also obligated to pay any early termination fees under the existing contract and any outstanding balance owed to the old carrier. Carriers are allowed to charge a fee to recover their "porting" costs. Porting is the technical process of switching a customer to a new carrier. Old carriers may not refuse to port a telephone number – even in cases in which customers owe money for an outstanding balance or termination fee. Customers should also be aware the 9-1-1 operators taking calls from wireless phones may not be able to automatically receive the phone number or location of the caller. Customers should ask the new carrier how the porting process will affect a call to 9-1-1 service. Wireless-to-wireless transfers should work within a few hours of the customer's request to switch. Wireline-to-wireless transfers may take several business days. Additional information on number portability is available at Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which oversees wireless phones (<http://www.fcc.gov>). Customers may file complaints about wireline telephone companies with the MPSC by calling toll-free: 1-800-292-9555.

Gov. Granholm Signs Major Credit Union Reform Measures: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm signed several new laws that modernize the regulation and chartering of state-chartered credit unions. The laws have several consumer friendly provisions, including a cap on interest rates for short-term loans and enhanced services to consumers in underserved areas.

The new laws represent the first major changes to the Michigan Credit Union Act since 1986. The provisions of the new laws include:

- modernizing and clarifying the powers of the Commissioner of the Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) to charter state credit unions as not-for-profit financial institutions and supervise those institutions;
- permitting state-chartered credit unions to make short-term loans to members of 30 days duration for an amount not to exceed \$1,000 (in place of higher-cost so-called "pay day loans"). For these loans, credit unions may not charge more than 10 percent of the principal amount of the loan in interest and fees;
- providing for an examination of state-chartered credit unions at least once every 18 months to determine if the institution is conducting its business in accordance with state laws;
- allowing the boards of directors for state-chartered credit unions to determine the field of membership of the credit union with certain restrictions and subject to review by the OFIS Commissioner;
- allowing for the merger of state-chartered credit unions with other credit unions or thrift institutions;
- expanding the ability of credit unions to provide certain services to nonmembers in underserved areas. These services include cashing checks, exchanging foreign currencies, and performing wire transfers.

These new laws accommodate changes in technology and business and allow credit unions to provide new services. Consumers will have more choices under these new laws when it comes to seeking and securing financial services through credit unions.

Matching Employers & Workers via the Internet

Nearly 70,000 Resume Searches on the Michigan Talent Bank: Employers continue to come to Michigan Talent Bank to find qualified candidates to fill their vacancies, evidenced by increased job opening and resume searches. The Michigan Talent Bank posted 33,589 new resumes, an 8.5 percent increase over September bringing the total searchable resumes to 621,835, an increase of 4,300 over September. New business registrations added: 1,006 - a five percent increase. More than 6,755 job orders were posted bringing the total job openings posted to 20,921 - a 12 percent increase over September. Total resume searches for the month were 69,868 - a 6.3 percent increase over the previous month.

Making Homeownership More Affordable

MSHDA Offers Low Cost Home Mortgages: Up to 695 low- to moderate-income Michigan families and residents will become homeowners with new low-cost mortgage loans from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). MSHDA has sold \$51.6 million in bonds to private investors, which will be used to fund loans that carry an initial interest rate of 5.50 percent. Homebuyers with household incomes up to \$56,650 in metropolitan counties and \$44,000 in rural counties may qualify for the 30-year loans to buy new or existing homes. Prospective homebuyers can fill out a pre-qualification application on MSHDA's Web site, <http://www.michigan.gov/mshda>. First-time homebuyers with incomes of 80 percent of county median or less (adjusted for family size) also may qualify for up to \$5,000 in down payment assistance. "We recognize that many homebuyers can afford mortgage payments but have limited resources for the down payment needed to buy a home," MSHDA acting executive director Rick L. Laber said. "By offering this assistance, we can help families who otherwise might be shut out of the market." Buyers may purchase an existing home costing up to \$105,000 and a new house costing up to \$128,000, depending on the location of the property. Compared to conventional interest rates of 6.25 percent, MSHDA financing will save the buyer of a \$70,000 loan approximately \$34 per month in payments for principal and interest. Homebuyers also may choose MSHDA's "step" loan program, which features a reduced interest rate of 5.00 percent for the first three years, and then is increased to 6.00 percent for the balance of the 30-year term. Borrowers will be qualified for the payment at the initial rate; the increase in payment at the fourth year is modest. The minimum down payment is generally 3 percent for conventional or FHA loans, or less if the buyer qualifies for financing guaranteed by the VA or Rural Development. The program is primarily for first-time homebuyers, but many localities in Michigan are exempt from this federal restriction. MSHDA does not refinance existing loans or land contracts. Because the federal government considers bond-financed mortgages to be subsidized, borrowers may be subject to federal "recapture tax" if they sell their home within nine years and realize a gain on the sale. Applications for MSHDA loans are taken by approximately 115 branch offices of lending institutions participating in the MSHDA program.

Cutting Through Red Tape for Michigan Businesses & Workers

Employer Customer Relations Answers the Call for UI: The newly re-established Employer Customer Relations (ECR) Unit for the state's unemployment insurance (UI) program opened its phone lines to employers on November 17. The five-member unit fields phone calls from employers who have questions about UI taxes and forms, as well as charges and billings to their UI accounts. Staff also answers employer questions about UI benefits. Employers can reach the unit by dialing 1-800-638-3994. Staff is available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The unit's goal is to answer employer questions without referring them to other areas in the agency. As a result, the Tax Office has more time to focus on its assigned tasks, and tax team staff is relieved from answering the many UI benefit questions they have been receiving. During their first day of operation, ECR staff received nearly 300 phone calls.

Last of Local UI Claims Taking Offices Closed in November: The last group of local unemployment insurance claims taking offices closed on Friday, November 15. The final seven local offices were in Canton, Detroit Eastside, Flint, Lapeer, Monroe, Port Huron and Sterling Heights. The remaining six offices are functioning as temporary full service problem resolution sites in Dearborn, Detroit Westside, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Madison Heights, and Saginaw. These offices will be succeeded by a new problem resolution system being developed, which includes four small permanent problem resolution offices in Marquette, Gaylord (temporarily in West Branch), Lansing and metropolitan Detroit.

Workers' Comp Goes after Employers Who Let Their Insurance Lapse: Michigan employers who allow their workers' compensation insurance coverage to lapse can be the target of an investigation and be subjected to a fine. The fine amounts to twice the premium rate the employer would have paid had insurance coverage been in force during the lapse period. Depending on the size and nature of the employer, fines have ranged from \$250 to more than \$30,000 and average about \$2,200. In addition to the fine, the employer is still personally responsible for any work related injuries that occur during the lapse period. From 1999 to date, the workers' compensation program has collected over \$800,000 in fines from investigations of some 850 employers. In those instances where a non-compliant employer is unable or unwilling to cooperate with the administrative procedure, the case is referred to the state's Attorney General and a complaint is filed in Circuit Court.



Members of the ECR unit are: (seated, l-r) LaRhonda Coleman, Sara Majer (lead worker), Kimberly White; (standing) Derek Boston and Isabel Szymczak.

Bommarito Heads Unemployment Insurance Program; Finn Directs Wage & Hour: The Department has named directors for its unemployment insurance (UI) and wage & hour programs.

Sharon Bommarito now heads the Unemployment Insurance Agency. She had been the personnel director for the City of Lansing. She is a former deputy director of personnel for Gov. James Blanchard and was involved with gubernatorial appointments to boards, commissions, judicial positions and full-time statutory positions. She is a graduate of Michigan State University. Bommarito now oversees the agency that administers the state's UI program, which paid out more than \$2.38 billion in state and federal jobless benefits in 2002 and collected more than \$944 million in state unemployment taxes from employers.

John (Jack) Finn has been named to head the Wage & Hour office. Finn joins the program after serving as an attorney and lobbyist with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. He has also worked with Michigan House and Senate staff and is a former member of the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board. He is a graduate of Michigan State University and received his law degree from the Detroit College of Law. Wage & Hour administers and enforces the laws, which protect the wages and fringe benefits of Michigan's workers and provide for the safe and legal employment of minors.



Jack Finn and Sharon Bommarito are the new directors for the state's wage & hour and unemployment insurance programs.

UIA Recognizes Those Involved with Employer Filed Claims: Representatives from DaimlerChrysler, Delphi, General Motors, Ford Motor Co., Visteon, the UAW and unemployment insurance staff were all recognized for their cooperation and help in successfully launching the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Employer Filed Claims (EFC) program. EFC allows employers to file unemployment claims on behalf of their employees during mass layoffs, such as during model changeover shutdowns. From December 2002 through November 2003, the first full year these five major employers were involved with the program, EFC processed more than 158,400 jobless claims. As more employers are being recruited for the program, it is expected that EFC will ultimately account for about 20 to 25% of all unemployment claim filings. The employers and union representatives, along with UI staff, were honored during the annual meeting of the Employers Unemployment Compensation Council in late October.



Representatives from DaimlerChrysler who were honored for their involvement with the Employer Filed Claims program were (left to right): John Rudzinski, Hugh McLeish, DLEG Deputy Director Dave Plawecki, JoAnn Hatfield and Frank Sands.



Representing Ford Motor Co. at the presentation were (front row, l-r): Karen McConnell, Kathy D'Herin, Nancy Beaudrie, and Nilesh Bilimoria; (second row, l-r): Ken Werbylo, Andy Llewellyn, Justo Vinales and DLEG Deputy Director Plawecki.

Providing Career Development Resources

Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs (COSSA) Chair Named One of the "Most Influential Hispanics": Mariano Pallares, chair of the Michigan Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs, was selected as one of the "Most Influential Hispanics" in Michigan by Corp! Magazine. The award ceremony took place at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn on Oct. 7, during the opening reception of the Hispanic Business Alliance's Expo. He received a plaque to commemorate this recognition.

Workforce Transition Section (WTS) Assists Employers and Displaced Workers: The Workforce Transition Section (WTS) responded to 12 notices of planned plant closures or mass layoffs in the last month. Contact was made with employers and union representatives in response to receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice, letter, phone call, newspaper article, or other means of notification. A brief overview of available dislocated worker services was given, and depending on the number of jobs impacted, a formal on-site Rapid Response Team Meeting was scheduled or arrangements were made for the local Michigan Works! Agency to meet with the affected employees to provide information on available services. Other services provided:

- Conducted three Rapid Response Meetings with employers (and union representatives, where employees are represented by a collective bargaining agreement).
- Responded to 84 phone calls and 20 e-mails from individuals, company/union representatives, and service providers who requested information or clarification of issues related to the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and dislocated worker services.
- Attended four worker orientation sessions and 15 Joint Adjustment Committee meetings (JAC). Joint Adjustment Committees are established to provide a more proactive, participatory response to large plant closings or mass layoffs.

Employment Service Agency (ESA) Exceeds Goal for Assisting Job Seekers: The ESA reports Michigan received 245 applications from businesses seeking approval to employ foreign-born workers on a permanent basis. ESA's Alien Labor Certification Section processed 126 permanent applications, certifying that there are no domestic workers available to meet the specific skill needs. For the program year ending June 30, 2003, Michigan exceeded its goal for providing intensive services to job seekers by 20 percent, resulting in nearly 240,000 such services. Intensive services are defined as job search workshops, resume assistance, labor market information, job search planning, and job development.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Assists 605 Michiganians with Disabilities Into Jobs in October: MRS provided disability-related services to 151 Michigan employers during the month of October. Chief among these services were worker referrals and help with retaining at-risk workers. MRS matches an employer's job needs with qualified workers, and also helps businesses retain valuable workers who may be at risk of losing their jobs because of illness or injury. A total of 605 Michiganians with disabilities were assisted into jobs during the month of October by MRS rehabilitation counselors across the state. Services provided to these individuals included job training, medical assistance such as prostheses and therapy, job-seeking skills training, and job placement assistance.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Receives \$225,000 USDOL Grant: MRS has been awarded \$225,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor to implement a statewide high school/high tech program in partnership with the State Workforce Investment Board. High School/High Tech is a career development program designed to provide high school age youth with disabilities an opportunity to explore careers or gain further education that may lead to technology-related careers. The program provides both in-school and out-of-school youth with disabilities year-round, work-based learning activities, including corporate site visits, mentoring, job shadowing, guest speakers, after-school activities, and summer internships.

Michigan Career & Technical Institute Receives \$35,000 Kellogg Foundation Grant: The dream of a lakeside pavilion to document the history of the Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) came closer to reality in November with a \$35,000 donation from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. MCTI has provided career training for Michigan adults with disabilities since 1944, when W.K. Kellogg leased the Pine Lake property in southwestern Barry County to the state of Michigan. In 1947, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation conveyed the property to the state with the provision that the facilities remain a training and rehabilitation center. Currently operated by DLEG, the school can serve nearly 400 students at one time, in addition to 120 high school-age campers with disabilities during the summer. Plans are underway to commemorate MCTI's 60th anniversary in 2004. The centerpiece of the celebration will be a newly constructed pavilion to house documents and other artifacts related to the school's history. The pavilion will also offer expanded recreational opportunities for MCTI students and campers. The Pine Lake Fund (PLF), a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to support MCTI, was asked to lead the anniversary celebration and accepted the Kellogg Foundation grant on behalf of the school. PLF has begun a fund-raising campaign to pay for the cost of the pavilion's construction and other expenses associated with the celebration.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) Fall Conference Held: The First Annual Adult Basic Education (ABE) Fall Conference was held in Flint at the M-TEC- Flint, November 7, on the Mott Community College campus. This conference was sponsored by the Michigan Department of Career Development, Office of Adult Education, and hosted by the ABE Advisory Group. The keynote speaker, Nancy Wegge, may be the only professional speaker in America who uses magic and who has an earned doctorate in adult education. Her keynote speech, "Working REAL MAGIC Cradle to Grave...and Beyond," looked at the diversity of adult learners and the latest techniques for helping them succeed. Breakout sessions were tailored to ABE instructional strategies and covered such topics as learning disabilities, literacy, pre-GED, life skill and technology, and numeracy (math). ABE roundtable discussions were offered for new ABE instructors and tutors, writing strategies, and pre-GED.

2004 Michigan Career Education Conference Scheduled Feb. 8-10: Teaching and Learning for Excellence is the theme of the 2004 Michigan Career Education Conference, February 8-10, at the DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids. The conference is sponsored by DLEG and Michigan State University's Michigan Center for Career & Technical Education (MCCTE). The Amway Grand Plaza Hotel is the conference hotel. The conference provides an excellent opportunity for everyone who is involved or interested in career education, including teachers, counselors, employers, parents, and students, to come together to share ideas and best practices. The conference traditionally attracts many people from throughout the state who are committed to providing better opportunities for the people of Michigan through career education. Keynote speakers will be John R. Kuglin and Dr. William Schmidt. Kuglin is vice president of education and training programs for Comchoice Inc., which authors DVDs for Warner Brothers, Twentieth Century Fox, and the British Broadcasting Corporation. Kuglin directs the company's effort to reposition DVD technologies into the K-16 and corporate classroom environments. He will speak about "The New Digital Age - Realizing the Potential for Education." Schmidt is a university distinguished professor and professor of educational psychology and measurement and quantitative methods, and co-director of the Education Policy Center at Michigan State University. He also is the national project coordinator and executive director of the center that oversees the participation of the United States in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. He will speak on "The Level Playing Field: A Central Myth in American Education." The Excellence in Practice Awards also will be presented at the conference. This prestigious award recognizes exemplary practices in preparing Michigan's students for careers. An excellent practice or program is expected to be part of a comprehensive career education system in which educators and their community partners collaborate to meet the challenges of preparing students for successful careers. Individual sessions will focus on career preparation, curriculum development, lifelong learning, special populations (e.g., special education, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, etc.), partnerships, and professional development. Online registration is available at: <http://www.mccte.msu.edu>.

Career Clusters Identified: The U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) has identified 16 Career Clusters representing career opportunities for the 21st century-economy. These clusters frame all the potential opportunities for students as they pursue postsecondary education and a wide range of employment opportunities from front-line careers in manufacturing, automotive technology, hospitality, etc., to professional and managerial careers. In 2001, the National Association of State Directors for Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEC) led the states in a project to establish curriculum frameworks, knowledge, skills, and supportive materials for each of the 16 clusters, using broad-based advisory committees. The knowledge and skills that were identified for each cluster by the advisory committees were validated by employers from throughout the country through a national Web site. On Nov. 5, more than 150 high school and community college representatives attended the rollout of the 16 Career Clusters and the curriculum materials in a workshop sponsored by the Michigan Department of Career Development, Office of Career and Technical Preparation. The Career Clusters' materials are organizing tools that educators can use to begin assessing how their systems address the academic and career needs of all students regardless of their career goals and interests. Career Clusters provide a common framework and a common language to foster partnerships among high school and postsecondary education teachers and counselors, employers, parents, and students. Career Clusters help establish the link between the knowledge students acquire in school and the skills they need to pursue their career dreams. Meeting these recognized standards will help students successfully transition to postsecondary education and/or employment. The standards also become valuable resources for employers to use in addressing the needs of those already in the workforce.

Seventy-Three People Attend "Bridges to Adulthood: Assistive Technology that Works": As a result of collaboration with the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan, the Adult Education Office, co-sponsored a pre-symposium for parents and professionals on Oct. 26, in East Lansing. Seventy-three people attended. The topic of "Bridges to Adulthood: Assistive Technology that Works" exhibited how technology can minimize the restricting effects of a learning disability.

Michigan Adult Education Reporting System (MAERS): The National Reporting System (NRS) reports are completed and available at <http://www.michigan.gov/dleg>, click on career development, career preparation, adult education. Two sessions of MAERS training were held Dec. 2 and 3. Dean Smith from the Office of Adult Education attended the November 7 Adult Basic Education Conference and the Adult Education Task Force meeting to answer questions on MAERS data issues. Mr. Smith also discussed the MAERS follow-up process at a recent English as a Second Language (ESL) Workshop.

"Michigan Postsecondary Admissions and Financial Assistance Handbook" Now Online: For more than 34 years the state of Michigan published the "Michigan Postsecondary Admissions and Financial Assistance Handbook" as a reference document for students and counselors. This very popular resource document provides institutional profile information and program inventory data for each postsecondary school in Michigan. Virtually every counselor in the state uses this book when advising students about their postsecondary education plans. Individual citizens and students have accessed the handbook at libraries, school districts, colleges, and universities, and educational resource centers. Having accurate and timely data in this system benefits the postsecondary institutions and youth and adults who are making their college choices. The handbook, which has been out of circulation since 1999, is now back and available online at <http://www.michiganfahandbook.net>. The Michigan Department of Treasury, Bureau of Student Financial Services, and the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth, Office of Postsecondary Services, cooperated to provide Michigan's citizens with information regarding admission and cost data along with information on the degrees and instructional programs offered at each of the more than 450 institutions in Michigan. Counselors and the families they assist have responded very favorably to the return of this vital resource.

Postsecondary Services Launches Veterans Education and Training Web Site: The Office of Postsecondary Services, Veterans Education and Training unit, recently launched <http://www.michigansaa.net> to provide outreach assistance to Michigan Veterans. Under contract from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Office of Postsecondary Services serves as the designated state-approving agency (SAA) to help veterans draw GI Bill benefits while enrolled in education or training classes. The Veterans Education and Training unit approves college and non-college degree programs and other training such as on the job training and apprenticeship programs so that federal educational assistance benefits may be paid to veterans and other eligible persons under the several programs administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The SAA must specifically approve each education program in which an institution wishes to enroll veterans and other eligible persons. The new Web site is intended to help veterans find approved programs and schools so that they may receive veterans benefits, as well as provide links to other valuable information that a veteran might need. Included in the new Web site are:

Approved Programs - This section allows you to review lists of approved schools and programs as well as search databases for specific programs.

Veterans Benefits - This section provides links to Web sites with information about a variety of benefits for veterans including health, disability, and more.

Research and Resources - This section provides access to many Web sites to facilitate research of medical, historical, and other information. This section also includes downloadable forms for schools to apply for approval to serve veterans.

This Web site helps answer a question that has been asked for years by veterans - where can I use my GI Bill benefits? It enables Michigan veterans to easily access the most current listing of participating schools and employers to help ease their transition from military service to civilian life.

Joint Fellows Conference Held to Improve Opportunities in Faculty Teaching Positions: DLEG Director David Hollister welcomed participants (via videotape) to the annual Joint Fellows Conference at Kellogg Center at Michigan State University in East Lansing on November 13-16. Michigan State University's graduate school hosted the conference along with the King-Chavez-Parks Initiative, Office of Postsecondary Services. More than 300 masters and doctoral students who received fellowships from the KCP Initiative's Future Faculty Fellowship Program, the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program, and the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program attended the conference. The conference is dedicated to improving opportunities for fellows in these programs to find faculty teaching positions in Illinois and Michigan.

Public Policy Forum Held to Discuss U.S. Supreme Court Decision on UM Admission Policy: DLEG Director David Hollister and the Director of the Department of Civil Rights, Dr. Nanette Reynolds, hosted a public policy forum at the Library of Michigan on Nov. 4. The forum focus concerned the implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions regarding the University of Michigan's admission policies and public policy implications. Distinguished panelists included: Cynthia Wilbanks, vice president, Office of Government Relations, the University of Michigan; Jonathan Alger, assistant general counsel, the University of Michigan; Paulette Granberry Russell, senior advisor to the president for diversity, Michigan State University; and Dr. John Matlock, associate provost and director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives, the University of Michigan.

TRENDS in Occupational Studies Draws Nearly 500 Participants: The Office of Postsecondary Services, Community College Services Unit, co-sponsored the TRENDS in Occupational Studies Conference held October 16 and 17 in Grand Rapids. The theme of this year's conference, was "Capturing the Best of the Past and the Excitement of the Future." Paula Cunningham, president, Lansing Community College, addressed the group as a keynote speaker on "Quality, You're It!" This two-day faculty-driven conference had nearly 500 participants and provided an opportunity for all individuals to partake in discussions with key players in the community college arena as well as networking with other faculty. More than 70 breakout sessions were offered, which assisted faculty in the development of their instructional skills, improving their ability to enhance the learning environment for students at their respective schools.

Protecting Worker Safety & Health

Kalinowski Elected as Chair of Occupational Safety & Health State Plan Association: Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA) Director Douglas J. Kalinowski of DeWitt was elected Chair of OSHSPA, the 26-member Occupational Safety and Health State Plan Association. Kalinowski was elected at the October association meeting and will serve as chair for two years. Across the U.S., 24 states and two territories administer their own unique workplace safety and health programs. Each state plan program must have legislative authority to monitor workplace safety and health conditions, and must be "at least as effective" as federal OSHA. The state programs that form OSHSPA share a common goal—safe and healthy workplaces for every worker through prevention of injuries, illnesses and fatalities on the job. These states have strong enforcement programs, and also conduct significant outreach activities, encouraging employers and employees to follow safe and healthful work practices. State plan states have been a strong national force in recognizing emerging workplace hazards and originating new methods for addressing those hazards. Specific areas where state plans have taken the lead include: ergonomics, bloodborne pathogens, and workplace violence. State programs have also pioneered the use of innovative partnerships, and have negotiated ground-breaking settlement agreements. Kalinowski was appointed as Bureau of Safety & Regulation (MIOSHA) Director in September 2002. Kalinowski has been active in OSHSPA for 12 years, and has served as a member of the Board of Directors for four years, with two years as Vice Chair.

State of Michigan Recognizes Companies for Health & Safety Records: The Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration (MIOSHA), formerly known as the Bureau of Safety & Regulation, has presented awards recognizing the safety and health achievements of Michigan employers and employees through Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division Awards. Recent recipients include:

Ergonomic Innovation Award to Tenneco Automotive's Litchfield Plant: Tenneco Automotive's Litchfield plant received the Ergonomic Innovation Award on Nov. 21. The award was presented to members of two active employee teams, the Ergonomics Team and the Litchfield Employees Accident Prevention System Team (LEAPS). Both teams played a major role in improving the Litchfield safety performance and were instrumental in the facility receiving the Ergonomic Innovation Award. The Ergonomics Team focuses on evaluating positions in plant work cells and implementing ergonomic safety practices. For example, they developed significant ergonomic innovations that eliminate manual handling of exhaust assemblies. The LEAPS Team, along with employee observers, spearheads the behavior-based safety process and obtains feedback from employees about areas needing improvement. The Ergonomic Innovation Award to employers for innovative ideas that have been implemented to reduce worker strain. The Litchfield facility is a Tier 1 manufacturer of exhaust assemblies and employs approximately 400 workers. Since 1998 they have made significant ergonomic improvements, including the use of different types of lift assist devices throughout the production line, to dramatically decrease manual lifting. They have also designed and modified workstations with adjustable worktables to reduce worker strains. Along with these improvements, the facility is using job rotation to reduce overexertion injuries. Tenneco Automotive is one of the world's largest producers and marketers of ride control and exhaust systems and products.

Johnson Technology's Norton Shores Facility Receives MVPP Rising Star Award: Johnson Technology, Inc.'s Norton Shores Plant received the prestigious Michigan Voluntary Protection Program (MVPP) Rising Star Award. The MIOSHA Consultation Education & Training (CET) Division established the MVPP program to recognize employers actively working toward achieving excellence in workplace safety and health. It was created in 1996 to reward worksites that develop and implement outstanding safety and health management systems that go beyond MIOSHA standards. David M. Yacavone, President, accepted the award on behalf of all 87 associates at a gathering of employees from both the Norton Shores Plant and the Latimer Plant, which received the MVPP Star award in 2003. The Norton Shores Plant produces turbine nozzle segments and turbine nozzle assemblies for aircraft gas turbine engines.

Flat Rock Metal Inc. Receives CET Bronze Award: Flat Rock Metal Inc.'s Michigan facility received the Consultation Education and Training Bronze Award, which recognizes leadership and commitment to workplace safety and health resulting in significant improvement of their MIOSHA record. The Flat Rock Metal Michigan facility, through the strong commitment of management and employees, has significantly improved their safety and health record. The company developed and implemented written safety and health policies and procedures, established a safety and health committee, appointed a safety and health designee, and reduced their injury and illness rate by 50 percent or more in the last three years. For nearly a quarter century, Flat Rock Metal Inc. has specialized in critical surface processing and preparation, servicing the automotive and steel industries. Flat Rock Metal is headquartered in Flat Rock, MI, and its four plants offer the following processes: Flat polishing/sheet blanking, cut-to-length/multi-blanking, critical exposed slitting, and inspection and coil mapping. The Flat Rock Michigan plant is a 90,000 sq. ft. facility, with 175 hourly employees.